PRAC minutes
November 1, 2012

Absent: P. Kahlbaugh, T. Radice, R. Zipoli

Meeting came to order 9:45 a.m.

PRAC recommends conditional approval for the Liberal Studies Program (LBS). A revised program review is due in 11 months and should address the standards and items discussed below.

PRAC notes that the revision requires work by the LBS Director and committee members but also requires a solid commitment from the administration to address the program's immediate need for, at minimum, additional staff in the form of an Assistant Program Director and an assistant or secretary as well as dedicated space. PRAC and the External Reviewer see this as essential. Without this support the program will be challenged to meet the program review standards as well as the program and university's mission.

Following PRAC's review of both the LBS program assessment and the External Reviewer’s report, it is clear that the Liberal Studies Program must remain viable in order to serve a growing student population of more than 500 students seeking the B.S. and B.A. in Liberal Studies. It is a unique program that currently endeavors to meet the challenge of serving similar numbers of students as SCSU’s largest departments, e.g. Psychology and English, but in the absence of essential physical facilities, faculty and staff support.

It is important to note that LBS, a relatively new program, requested conditional approval in order to refine its self-study. This will also allow time to incorporate its recent program modification approved by the UCF. In an effort to guide LBS through the revision process, PRAC makes the following recommendations:

PRAC’s discussion of the program review focused on the following areas: Additional staffing and office space, statement of a cohesive program, improved assessment measures and improved student advisement vis a vis dedicated faculty advisors and a larger general advisement staff dedicated to LBS.

Because of the time frame required by conditional approval and the unique circumstances of LBS, PRAC suggests that the revised report focus on standards 2 and 3, which provide the foundation for many of the other standards. However, when assessment data for any of the standards are available, this data should be included and interpreted in the revised report. Where data are not available, a practical plan for data collection should be described.

Standard 2: The LBS Program has clearly stated Goals and Objectives.
Convene the Liberal Studies Committee to discuss and identify clearly stated program goals and objectives. A “coherent foundation” should be in place before students enter the capstone course. The concern is, as explained by the External Reviewer, without a coherent foundation “...too much is being asked of the capstone course.” Courses within the minors should contribute to the knowledge and skills required of students in the capstone, and will enhance their success by alleviating some of the weight placed upon the capstone.
This will require support from departments and faculty that work with the LBS program and its students.

It is suggested that LBS submit examples of curriculum mapping to illustrate how the flow of study may be manifested for students within a variety of minors. Courses within the minors can be identified as those that support the capstone in necessary ways.

Standard 3: The LBS program has clearly stated program-level expected student outcomes and methods for measurement. This refers back to Standard 2. Clearly stated program-level student outcomes will allow the program to improve the implementation and assessment of direct measures. Currently, the capstone course carries the weight of measuring program-level student outcomes. LBS might consider requiring/identifying projects within the minors that provide direct measurement of student outcomes during and after the completion of the program.

Meeting adjourned 10:30